

Section IV

When you are finished with this section, you will be able to:

Describe the principles of medication administration

Describe the principles of infection control: hand washing

Demonstrate the 5 steps to clean hands

List the “Six Rights” of medication administration

Medication Administration

When you give medications, regardless of the type of medication, there are some basic principles that you will always follow. The basic principles that you will always follow are:

- Talk with the individual and explain what you are doing before you give medications. Answer any questions that the individual has. Allow the individual to be as involved as possible in the process.



- Give medication administration your **complete attention**. Give medications in a quiet area, free from distractions. Never leave medications unattended, even for a moment.
- Provide privacy for the individual.
- Wash your hands! You must wash your hands before giving medications and then again after you have given medication to each individual.
- When you are giving some types of medications it is necessary to wear gloves.



- Change your gloves as soon as you have finished administering medications to the individual. Never re-use gloves for more than one individual and always wash your hands again after you take off your gloves.

The Six Rights

When you are giving medication, regardless of the type of medication, you must always follow the six rights.

Remember: if you have a question or a concern, you should **always** and call for help!



Principles of Infection Control: Handwashing

The single most important thing you can do to safeguard the health of others and yourself is wash your hands---and do it a lot!



How many times per day do you and the individuals that you support need to wash your hands?

We all need to wash our hands:

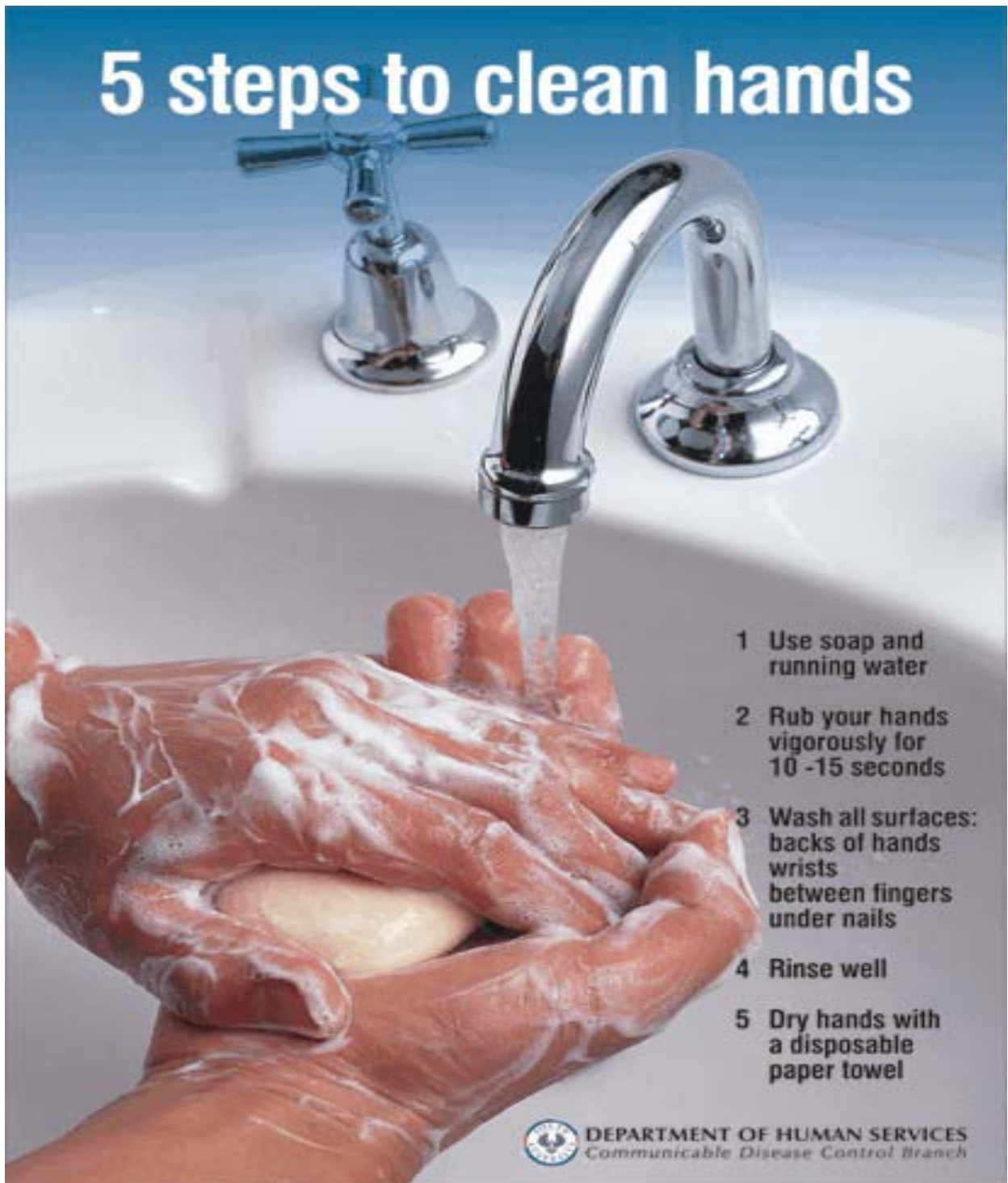
- When we arrive at work
- After going to the bathroom
- Before, during and after meal preparation
- Before eating
- After blowing our nose, sneezing or coughing
- After providing personal care
- After gardening, housework
- Whenever hands are visibly dirty
- Before and after administering medications to an individual
- First thing in the morning and last thing at night

Effective handwashing is proven to decrease spread of colds and flu and to reduce overall infection rates. Handwashing with soap and water is the most sensible way to make sure that your hands are clean

You may also use an **alcohol-based hand rub** in place of soap and water.



Wearing gloves does not take away the need for handwashing: always wash your hands as soon as you take your gloves off. And, only wear a pair of gloves to complete a specific task for a specific individual. Never wear the same pair of gloves for another task or with another individual.



Source: www.health.sa.gov.au/pehs/images/clean-hands.jpg
Government of South Australia, Department of Human Services accessed 7/10/03

Six Rights Of Medication Administration

Each time you administer a medication, you need to be sure to have the:

- 1. Right individual**
- 2. Right medication**
- 3. Right dose**
- 4. Right time**
- 5. Right route**
- 6. Right documentation**

Each time you give a medication, you must systematically and conscientiously check your procedure against these six rights.

This is essential **every time** you administer **any** medication – including medications that an individual has been taking for a long time.

You must check for all six rights every time you administer any drug to any individual.

Each time that you give a medication, you also need to remember to do the "Three Checks". This means that you are going to do a "triple-check" to make sure that the six rights are present each time that you give a medication. You must:

- 1. Remove the medication from the locked area and check the prescription label against the medication log to make sure that they match: **this is the 1st check.****
- 2. Before pouring the medication, check the prescription label against the medication order to make sure that they match: **this is the 2nd check.****
- 3. After you pour the medication, but before you give it, check the prescription label against the medication log entry again to make sure that they match: **this is the 3rd check.****

Right Individual

In order to make sure that you are about to administer medications to the right individual, you have to know the individual.


Even when you know the individual well, mistakes can happen. Sometimes, when medications are being administered to more than one individual in a setting, or if you prepare medications for more than one individual at a time, you can be distracted and give the medications to the wrong individual.

You can avoid a serious mistake if you:

1. Prepare medication for one individual at a time.
2. Give the medication to the individual as soon as you prepare it.
3. Do not talk to others and ask them not to talk to you when you are giving medication.
4. Do not stop to do something else in the middle of giving medications.
5. Pay close attention at all times when you are giving medications.

You must also compare the individual's name on the prescription label, the medication order and the medication log. Make sure that they match.

If they do not match, or if there is any doubt about whether you are

giving the medication to the right individual,  !

Follow your agency's policy for reporting medication occurrences.

Right Medication

In order to be sure that you are giving the right medication, you must:

Read the medication label carefully (remember that some medications have more than one name: a brand name and at least one generic name).

Check the spelling of the medication carefully. If there is **any** doubt about whether the medication name is correct, stop and call the nurse or the pharmacist **before** you give the medication.

Read the medication order carefully. Make sure that the medication name on the order matches the medication name on the label.

Read the medication log carefully. Make sure that the medication name on the label, the medication order and medication log match **before** giving the medication.

Look at the medication. If there is anything different about the size, shape or color of the medication, call the pharmacist **before** you give it. It could be that you have been given a different generic brand of the medication. But sometimes when a medication looks different it means that you have been given the wrong medication.

Compare the medication name on the prescription label, the medication order and the medication log.

If they do not match, or if there is any doubt that you are giving the



right medication, !

Follow your agency's policy or procedure for reporting medication occurrences.

Right Dose

The right dose is **how much** of the medication you are supposed to give the individual at one time.

To determine the dose, you need to know the **strength** of each medication. In the case of liquid medications, you need to know the strength of the medication in each liquid measure.

The dose equals the strength of the medication multiplied by the amount.
Look at the sample label below.

RX #:828291	Town Pharmacy 100 Main Street Pineville, MA 00000 (617) 000-0000	
Jeff Smith		09/29/00
Valproic Acid 250mg (I.C. Depakote)		
Take 2 tabs by mouth twice a day		
Lot #: PS 56721	Exp. Date: 9/29/01	By Dr. B.J. Honeycutt Refills: 4

The **strength** of each Valproic acid pill is **250 mg**.

The **dose** is **500mg** twice daily.

Strength (250mg per pill) X Amount (2 tabs)= 500mg

Compare the dose on the prescription label, the medication order and the medication log.

If they do not match, or if there is any doubt that you are giving the



right dose, !

Follow your agency's policy or procedure for reporting medication occurrences.

ALERT! Always ask the pharmacist or the nurse about any order that requires administering more than 3 tablets or capsules of the same medication in one dose. This could be an over-dosage!

Right Time



Some medications must be administered only at very specific times of the day. For other medications, the time of day that you give the medication is less critical.

For example, some medications must be given before meals, one hour after meals or at bedtime in order to work best.

It is very important for medication to be given at the time of day that is written on the medication order. If no specific time is written on the medication order, ask the nurse or pharmacist about the best time of day to give the medication. Write this down on the medication log.

Compare the time on the prescription label, the medication order and the medication log.

If they do not match, or if there is any doubt about whether you are



giving the medication at the right time, !

Follow your agency's policy or procedure for reporting medication occurrences.

****Medications must be given within a ½ hour of the time that is listed on the medication log. This means that you have ½ hour before the medication is due, and ½ hour after it is due to administer the medication.**

****The ½ hour timeframe does not apply to PRN medications.**

For example: If you have a medication order and prn protocol for Tylenol to be given every 4 hours as needed, you cannot give it until 4 hours have passed since the last dose.

Right Route

The route means how and where the medication goes into the body.

Most medication is taken into the mouth and swallowed, but others enter the body through the skin, rectum, vagina, eyes, ears, nose, and lungs, through a g-tube or by injection.

The most common way (or route) for medications to enter the body is by mouth.

Compare the route on the prescription label, the medication order and the medication log.

If they do not match, or if there is any doubt about whether you are giving the medication by the right route,



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Follow your agency's policy or procedure for reporting medication occurrences.

Sometimes mistakes happen when you are giving several medications by different routes at the same scheduled time.

For example, you may be giving an eye drop and an eardrop to the same individual at the same time. If you become distracted, you could accidentally put the eardrops in the individual's eye. This would be a very serious mistake.

Avoid this type of mistake by giving the eye drops first, and then put away the eye drops. After you have put the eye drops away, give the ear drops.

Right Documentation

Your responsibilities are not yet complete!

Each time a medication is administered, it must be documented.

Your documentation of medication administration must be done at the time that you give the medication.

You must complete all of the documentation that is required on the medication log.

- Documentation should be done in blue or black ink.
- No pencil or white out can be used.
- Never cross out or write over documentation.
- If you make a mistake when you are documenting on the medication log, circle your mistake and write a note on the log to explain what happened.

Double check your documentation as soon as you have finished giving medications and again at the end of the day.

If there is someone else that can double-check your documentation for you, ask him or her to go over your medication log documentation to make sure that it is complete.

All documentation must be done at the time that the medication is administered.

If there is any question about documentation on the medication log,



Follow your agency's policy or procedure for reporting medication occurrences.